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The President's Daily Brief

2 January 1970

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

2 January 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Moscow has told Bonn it is willing to talk with the Western powers on Berlin. *(Page 1)*

There is evidence that the North Vietnamese are moving heavier artillery into north Laos. *(Page 2)*

Communist terrorism in Thailand has increased in recent weeks. *(Page 3)*

The Chinese, in an authoritative editorial, have directly denounced Brezhnev for the first time since the Chou-Kosygin meeting of last September. *(Page 4)*

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The Soviets are constructing a division-size installation in Mongolia. *(Page 5)*

Peking [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] Italian and Canadian [redacted] *(Page 6)* 50X1

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USSR-BERLIN

Moscow has expressed its willingness to talk with the Western powers on West Berlin in an oral demarche delivered by the Soviet chargé in Bonn on 29 December. The Soviet diplomat also reaffirmed Soviet opposition to Bundestag committee meetings in West Berlin. He noted that such meetings were planned for this month but did not threaten any counteraction.

This is the first direct Soviet comment on the Allied proposal for four-power talks on Berlin since the formal Soviet reply on 12 September. Moscow apparently felt it necessary to impress upon the Western powers its continuing interest in discussing the Berlin problem without committing itself on the specifics of the proposed talks.

In an effort to create a favorable climate for give and take with the Soviets, Chancellor Brandt decided early last month not to hold the customary January Bundestag work week in West Berlin. Bonn will not make any further concessions, however, and individual committees and party groups will continue to hold frequent sessions in West Berlin.

Moscow seems interested in continuing a dialogue with the West on various issues, and the Soviets are not likely to provoke a crisis over these meetings.

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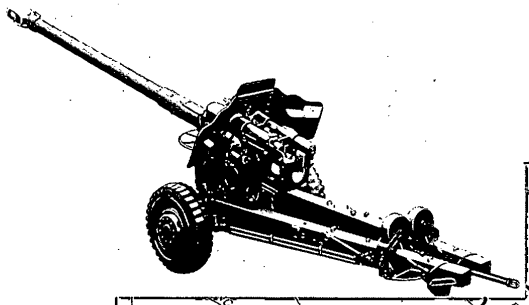
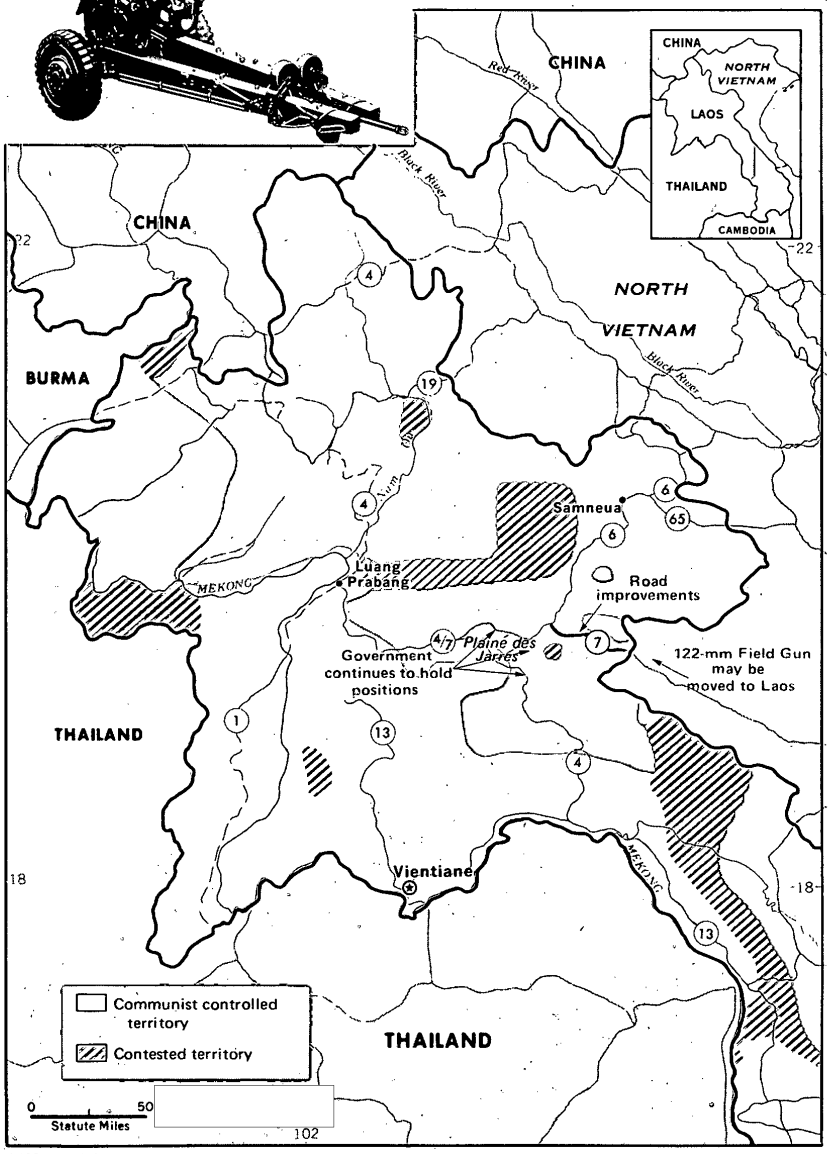
122-mm Field Gun D-74 (type captured by US in A Shau Valley)



Northern Laos: Current Situation



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LAOS

The North Vietnamese appear to be moving medium artillery into north Laos. According to an intercepted message of 30 December, North Vietnamese engineers along Route 7 were pushing to complete road improvements by 1 January in order to support the movement of a convoy towing 122-mm. "long-barreled artillery pieces."

> *This would be the first time that Communist forces have employed such a weapon in Laos. A weapon of similar caliber was captured by US forces in the Au Shau Valley of South Vietnam last February.*
>
> *The surprising degree of success that government guerrillas have had in holding strategic highpoints near the Plaine des Jarres, despite repeated North Vietnamese ground attacks, may be responsible for the decision to introduce heavier artillery into north Laos at this time.*

Another intercept of mid-December suggests that the North Vietnamese are also increasing sharply the flow of arms and ammunition into north Laos.

> *These shipments, and the movement of artillery--at a time when the Communists normally take the offensive--are further indications that the long-anticipated Communist counteroffensive against the Plaine des Jarres may soon begin.*

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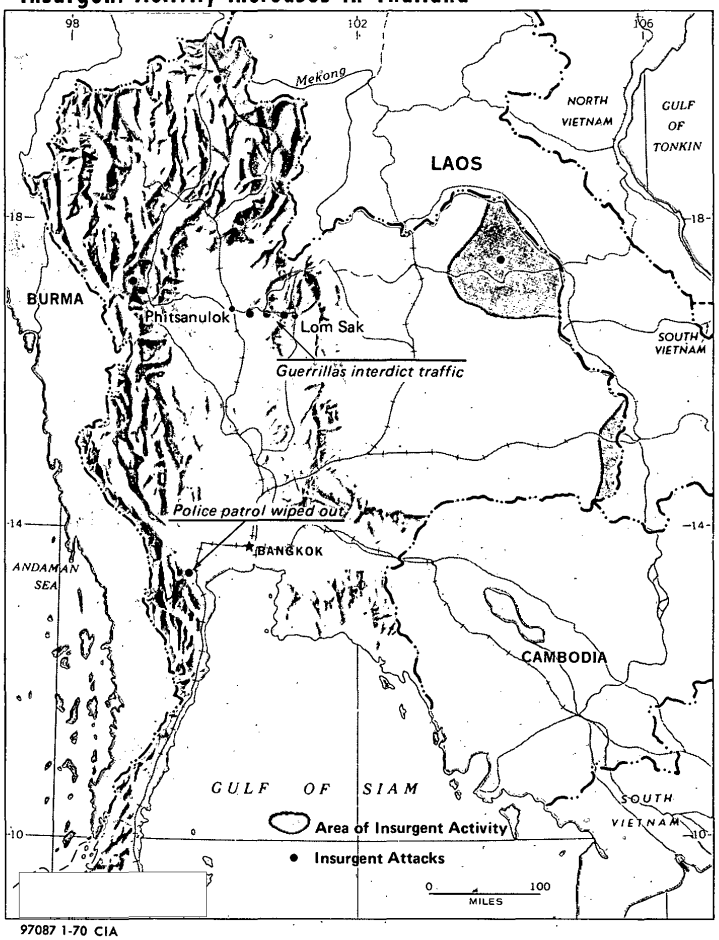
Insurgent Activity Increases in Thailand



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THAILAND

Communist insurgents have mounted several ambushes in recent weeks, causing a number of casualties among government security officials. In the most serious attack, a police patrol was wiped out in an area west of Bangkok that heretofore has been largely free of insurgent activity. There has also been a marked rise in guerrilla activity in the northeast and north-central areas of the country.

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[redacted] *the Communists may stage some headline-grabbing activity this month to celebrate the first anniversary of the Thai People's Liberation Armed Forces--the embryonic military arm of the Communist Party of Thailand.* 50X1

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COMMUNIST CHINA - USSR

In an authoritative editorial on 31 December the Chinese directly denounced Soviet party leader Brezhnev by name for the first time since the Chou-Kosygin meeting last September. The article also underscored China's determination to defend its frontiers from attack by either the US or the Soviets.

The Chinese commentary is consistent with the more strident tone China's anti-Soviet polemics have adopted in recent weeks, and is intended to put Moscow on notice that the Chinese will continue to be tough negotiators when the border talks resume. Moscow this morning announced that its delegation chief, First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov, returned to Peking today.

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USSR-MONGOLIA

Recent satellite photography shows a division-size installation under construction at Sumber Suma, Mongolia. Only a few vehicles were observed at the new installation, which was begun sometime after November 1968, suggesting that it is not yet fully occupied.

The Soviets probably are forming a high-level headquarters to control at least three divisions in Mongolia. There are now two Soviet divisions there--one at Ulan Bator and one at Sayn Shanda. Another smaller ground force unit at Choybalsan may eventually be brought up to division strength.

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COMMUNIST CHINA - ITALY - CANADA

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NOTE

Chile: The impasse over the selection of a presidential candidate is widening the divisions within the Communist-leftist electoral front. The six parties of the Popular Unity Movement finally agreed on a program last week after months of wrangling, but have been unable to settle on a candidate. Opposition to the leading contender, Socialist Senator Salvador Allende, on grounds that he is overexposed after three unsuccessful tries at the presidency, has led him to withdraw his name [redacted] 50X1 [redacted] There is growing talk that 50X1 Senator Rafael Gumucio, who recently broke away from the governing Christian Democratic Party, will be the compromise candidate.

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